THE SERIOUS DILEMMA OF THE BISHOP OF OKLAHO

He Must Choose Between Recognizing a Son Born in His University Days and Following the Advice of the Boy's Mother to Have the Secret Undisclosed.

BY OSCAR FAY ADAMS.

TO be conspicuously good looking, and while still on the sunny side of forty to have reached the haven of the episcopate, is surely to have been favored of fortune above the majority of one's fellows. But thus favored, indeed, was the Bishop of Oklaho, who was only thirty-eight, and had been known for three years as the handsomest member of the American House of Bishops.

And as a rule bishops are comely to look upon. How much of this comeliness is inherent in their office, it might be hard to determine. Some very plain featured rectors have become, if not precisely beautiful, at least wonderfully imposing in aspect after their enrollment among the bishops. The diocesan of Oklaho, however, had been noted as a handsome man while he was yet the spiritual ruler of a small country parish only. Elderly and cynical members of the general convention (of the lower house, of course) had been heard to assert that the Bishop of Oklaho's elevation to the episcopate was due solely to the fact of his handsome features; but this assertion must have been colored by personal bitterness. For it is quite certain that until standing committees admit women delegates to their deliberations we need not expect that the beauty of a candidate will have controlling weight in the nomination of a bishop.

But to whatever circumstance the Bishop of Oklaho owed his election, that he was well fitted for his office no one attempted to deny. He was an untiring worker, a preacher of unusual eloquence, and, what was of prime importance, the possessor of a charm of manner which never failed of disarming opposition to his faith in localities where the Episcopal church was known only by unfriendly and vague report.

In the third year after his consecration as bishop he was called upon to perform other duties than those relating to the administration of affairs in his own diocese. The Bishop of Saginaw had just died and the Bishop of Oklaho was asked to undertake a confirmation tour planned by the late bishop shortly before his death. It was while engaged in this work that he visited Port Huron to hold a confirmation.

Much had been heard in the little city concerning the handsome bishop and his eloquent sermons. On the Sunday morning of his visitation Christ Church was filled by a congregation made up not only of its own members, but of strangers from other places of worship. There were present even some of Her Majesty's loyal subjects from Sarnia and Fort Edward across the river.

As the bishop entered the chancel, following the choristers and the rector, there was a rustle among the pews which expressed admiration just as unmistakably as if it had been put into words and displayed before each seat in letters a foot high. The bishop detected the rustle as he passed on to his chair within the sanctuary, and knew exactly how to interpret it. And being human, it did not displease him that such a ripple of sound should spread itself over a congregation upon his appearance.

The rector interpreted the rustle correctly, likewise, and being quite as human as the bishop, and far less amiable, it was not pleasant for him to remember that no such gratifying murmur had ever attended his own entrance into the chancel. Rectors who look upon themselves as bishops in embryo are sometimes forgetful of the very wide distance between bishops in posse and bishops de facto.

When morning prayer was over, and the choristers, a little fluttered from unusual exertions (for they had lifted up their voices as the storm wind for intensity) were recovering from their flight into the empyrean, the confirmation followed in due form. Then the bishop, after a few words of advice to the candidates before him, entered the pulpit, and the congregation settled itself comfortably back among the pew cushions, prepared to be moved howsoever the reverend preacher should ordain.

The Canadian contingent present were pleased to note that the bishop followed the Anglican custom of prefacing the sermon by a short prayer in the pulpit, but the rest were a little disturbed at the trifling departure from what they were used to.

A moment later the circumstance was forgotten. When the prayer was ended the bishop began his text with the words: "If we say that we have no sin—" and at this point raised his eyes and looked out upon his audience. As he did so those in the pews saw him start slightly, as if surprised at something, and then followed a long and singular pause, during which the bishop stood looking straight before him. The rector, who from his seat in the chancel could not see the face of the bishop, assumed that the pause was being made for rhetorical effect, and made an inward comment thereon not over complimentary to his superior; but those who noted the color fleet back and forth over the bishop's countenance passed no such judgment.

The silence had grown almost painful when it was broken by the bishop's voice once more announcing his text, and no trace of agitation showed itself in the quiet, even tones.

"If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; but if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

The sermon upon this theme was very much unlike those to which Port Huron was accustomed to listen, and even the choir boys hearkened on this occasion. The bishop spoke as men speak who are intensely in earnest. Mediocrity becomes respectable when the speaker is impressed with his theme, but when eloquence is touched with the crowning quality of intense sincerity, its utterance becomes inspiration. And the bishop appeared like one inspired while he faced his audience that morning.

After the sermon was over, if the singular preparatory pause was recalled, it was attributed to some momentary indisposition by most of those present. But the rector did not thus account for it; and being as impervious to sermons as most clergymen grow to be in time, he gave only critical and hostile attention to the present one. There was one other listener who did not interpret the pause as the congregation had done, but placed no uncharitable construction upon it. In that pause this listener realized that the Bishop of Oklaho had suddenly come face to face with his nearly forgotten past.

"The church appeared very full today," observed the prelate blandly, as he walked home to dinner with the rector after service.

"Yes," returned the other, with that little show of cynicism observable in clergymen turned fifty who have not attained distinction, "yes, it was. A confirmation brings every one out."

The sharp note did not escape the bishop's notice. He had recognized it in the voices of other clergymen on similar occasions, and it amused him a little. Yet to all appearance he ignored its existence and went on placidly with what he had in mind.

"I fancied some of the people might have been from the Canadian side."

"So they were," answered the rector; "at least twenty or thirty of them. One was that rather good looking woman sitting in the last seat but one on the left of the middle aisle. She had her son with her—a boy of about fifteen. You may have observed her, for strangers are apt to ask who she is, I find."

"I think I do remember seeing some such person as you describe," said the bishop, indifferently. "Is she anybody in particular?"

"No one knows very much about her," was the rector's response. "She is a widow who has lived ten years or more at Fort Edward, and who, I hear, is much liked by her neighbors. Her name is Eccleston, and I have come to know her slightly from her occasional attendance at my church. But here we are at the rectory."

In the afternoon, as the bishop was taking a quiet walk by himself along the river side, and thereby somewhat scandalizing the Baptist parson, he was met by the boy of whose mother the rector had spoken in the morning.

"You are the bishop, are you not, sir?" said the lad a little timidly, as he raised his hat.

"They call me one," returned the dignitary, smiling.

There was a strong likeness between the two as they stood together on the river bank looking toward Lake Huron. One might have almost taken them for brothers. The bishop appeared not a day over thirty-five, while the lad, though but fifteen, was tall, and looked several years older than that.

"My mother wished me to say, if I saw you," said the younger, "that she would be glad if you could find time to call upon her before you leave Port Huron, for she once knew you, she says. Our name is Eccleston, and we live over across the river between Fort Edward and Sarnia."

"I leave for Chicago to-morrow morning," said the bishop; "but I have an hour or two of leisure this afternoon. Perhaps you will kindly conduct me to your mother's house," he added; and they walked to the ferry together.

The boy's message was not wholly unexpected. When his eyes met those of Mrs. Eccleston, as he was announcing his text, the bishop had felt that some such summons was not unlikely to follow, and since then he had been thinking of little else.

Long years before, when he was not a bishop at all, was not in deacons' orders even, but was merely a worldly, lively undergraduate at Harvard University, he had met for the first time the woman he was now going to see. She was then the daughter of a small shopkeeper in Boston, and her face had taken his fancy when he first entered her father's shop. Soon he came to know her well. When he strove to please, no one had ever been proof against his persuasive manner, either when he was Harvard student, or as right reverend bishop; and for weeks and months he devoted a great deal of time to pleasing Helen Southwick.

The angular rector of Port Huron, whose past was assuredly ascetic enough to satisfy any Puritan divine, would have recoiled from the Bishop of Oklaho as from Mephistopheles himself had he known more of his guest's early years. The young undergraduate had most assuredly been in love—after a careless fashion, and Helen had been in love also—in a fashion that was not careless.

Time had passed, and he had taken his degree in June. Early in the following Autumn they were to be married, he had told her. Very early in July he had sailed for Europe with his mother, to be gone six weeks. On his return there was to be a quiet wedding at the Southwicks', and then he would take her to his own home in Connecticut. It was not a very wise plan that he had made, and to most persons it would have seemed very vague as to important details; but it did not seem so to Helen or her father. As for the contriver of it, he fully meant to carry it out, and trust to time to reconcile his people to his marriage. Helen's face would bring about this result, he argued with himself.

There came one or two letters from him to the little shop in Boston, but at the end of six weeks he had not returned, nor did the Autumn bring him, either. It was after the lapse of more than a year that he came back, and then he heard in a vague, indirect fashion that Helen was dead, and that her father had gone from Boston, no one knew whither. Absence and new and multiplied experiences had left those few months of the year before but dimly outlined in his memory; and since Helen was dead it was comparatively easy to forget, almost, that she had ever lived.

A year or two afterward, in obedience to more serious impulses than he had ever felt before, he had entered the General Theological Seminary in New York, and Helen Southwick, thereafter became only the rarest tenant of his thoughts, the occasional theme of a regretful musing over the past. But when from the pulpit of Christ Church he recognized the face of the woman he had supposed long dead, he knew that he saw her and no other. That long pause at which the rector had sneered as theatrical was filled for the bishop with the events of sixteen years before.

And now he was going to see the woman whom he had once loved—in his way; the woman he had deserted. To the boy beside him he seemed the impersonation of serenity, but he was very far from being at peace just then.

After they had gone on board the ferry boat the bishop, who in spite of his preoccupation had been interested in what the boy was saying of the various objects in sight, was led to look more closely at his companion. As he did so, something caused him to flush and pale as he had done in the morning.

"I hope you are not ill," said the boy anxiously.

"It is only a slight attack of dizziness," the other replied, after a moment. "It is quite gone now."

"I am glad of that," said the boy, as they left the rail where they had been standing and moved to a seat near. "I should be very sorry to think you were really ill."

"Why so, my boy? You have never seen me before," said the bishop lightly.

"I know that, but——" and the speaker hesitated.

"But what?" asked the other encouragingly.

"I know you will think me foolish. I am sure you will, but it's the truth, all the same. I—I like you. I did when I first saw you in church, and when my mother said she used to know you, and sent me to ask you to come and see her I was so glad," concluded the boy, hurrying his words together impulsively.

The bishop laid his hand kindly on young Eccleston's shoulder. The lad flushed with pleasure, but neither spoke for some moments. Eccleston saw that he had not displeased the bishop, who, for his part, was recalling his boyhood, when his heart used to go out towards those he fancied in sudden impulses of affection. But a certain something implied by this similarity of temperament was not altogether satisfactory to him. Bishops may have their bad quarter hours as well as shepherds of less exalted stature, or even as unsanctified laymen have.

"It is always pleasant to be liked," he said, breaking the silence at length, "and I trust we shall know each other better in the future. But you must talk to me now about yourself and your mother, whom I have not seen since I was a young man. Your father, I conclude, is not living."

"No, he is not, or at least I do not think so. I never saw him, and my mother says she has not heard of him at all for ever so many years. After my grandfather died we came here from Toronto and I have never known any other home. Perhaps you knew my father. I often wonder how he looked."

"I think you must resemble him," replied the bishop, "for you don't look like your mother."

The two had landed from the ferry boat some moments before this, and very soon came to Mrs. Eccleston's. The boy, after showing the bishop into the house, excused himself in order to summon his mother. The bishop sat quietly in the little parlor, where the boy had left him, his elbow resting on the table beside him, and his hand shading his eyes. Birds were calling to each other among the honeysuckles outside the open windows, but he heard neither their notes nor the footsteps of some one approaching. It crossed his mind at that moment how the rector of Port Huron would wonder to see him there.

"Ernest," said a voice that for sixteen years he had thought silent forever—"Ernest, it is I."

He rose confusedly, and faced the woman he had loved and left so long ago. In doing so he speedily forgot the ascetic rector across the river. The same woman, but not the same. The Helen Southwick of his remembrance was slight of figure and shy in manner, and her beauty had seemed of a fleeting or at least an ethereal kind.

The woman that now met, unshrinking, his gaze,
Seemed to bask in the silent but sumptuous haze
Of that soft second summer, more ripe than the first,
Which returns when the bud to the blossom hath burst.

But the beauty of maturity had not effaced or obscured certain well remembered characteristics of Helen's young womanhood, else he had not known so quickly whose eyes were meeting his from the far end of the church that very morning.

"Helen!" exclaimed the visitor, as he took her extended hand. "I never thought to find you here. I had thought——"

"Yes, I know," she interposed gently. "You thought that I was dead, as I intended you should when you thought of me at all. Until I saw you at church I had no knowledge of you. I had not thought of you as a bishop, Ernest."

The man before her winced at these last words, as she saw.

"Pardon me, Ernest," she added. "I did not mean to wound. I had never heard of your return to America, and had come to fancy you might still be in Europe. Tell me," she continued, "did you like him?"

"Like him?" repeated the other, questioningly.

"I mean my boy, your son, who brought you to me," was the answer, very quietly given.

Although the Bishop of Oklaho had been in a measure prepared for this ever since that close scrutiny of the lad's features on the ferryboat, yet now that the fact was announced by Helen it came upon him with almost as great a shock as if he had not been telling himself since that moment that it must be so. He groaned inwardly.

"He is very like you in some ways," went on the woman's calm tones, "and I have trained him to be manly and noble. As your acknowledged son, even, he never would shame you by want of breeding, I think."

"I am sure of that, Helen," said the bishop, looking at her, and then the two sat for some moments in a silence which the woman was the first to break.

"Perhaps you are wondering, Ernest, why I have sent for you. There were two reasons for it—one affecting you, the other myself. I feared after this morning's recognition that you might imagine I should urge claims against you in the future, might make myself your enemy, in fact. I wanted you to know that nothing was farther from my intention, that I had no desire to exercise a disturbing influence in your life. I might have written all this, it is true, but because I am a woman, I longed to speak with you once more. I wished that my boy should speak with you, too, although he will never know that you are his father;" and there was just the shade of quivering in the voice of the speaker here.

The bishop, who was feeling very little like a bishop at this moment, bent his head lower and lower, as he listened. Had Helen, then, no least word of reproach for his desertion of her? Her implied forgiveness was more bitter than any accusation she could have made, and cut more deeply into his soul.

"Then, too, there was another reason," she resumed, her tones quite firm now. "I wanted to say to you, in case you had ever felt as if you had caused my ruin, that it was a mistaken fear, and that you need not be troubled by any remorse. I preferred to say this rather than write to you, lest by any chance the letter should fall under eyes other than yours. Soon after you saw me last we moved from Boston, and later my father had it reported that I was dead. Then in Toronto we began a new life. I took my mother's name of Eccleston, and passed for a young widow who had returned to her father's home. Then my boy was born, and on my father's death, two or three years later, my son and I came here, where we have since lived very happily, and, I have reason to believe, respected by our neighbors."

The bishop had raised his head by this time.

"Helen," he cried, when she had finished, "I proved myself all unworthy of you in those far-off days. I am unworthy of you still, but such as I am"—and here he thought of his episcopal honors half with pride and half with shame—"such as I am, will you not take me and let the rest of my life be spent in atoning, so far as atonement is possible, for the wrong of the past?"

She shook her head sadly.

"Do you know what you ask?" she queried. "Do you know, do you realize at all what such a step involves?"

"Not the faintest shadow need touch you, Helen," he answered, "if this is what you fear. Your past and mine need never be questioned. We might write to each other for a time, and then, after a few months, have a quiet wedding, after which I will take you and the boy to my home."

"But I am not thinking of myself," she exclaimed. "It is of you;" and as she spoke the lad passed before the open window. "Ernest," she resumed, when the boy had gone from hearing, "don't you see how nearly he resembles you? Would not that single fact raise a scandal at once if you were seen to visit me here often? It would follow you to Oklaho as well. The truth would be surmised very soon, and then it might be said that I had hunted you out and forced you to marry me. And what would your clergy say of you, or to you? And how could you place matters in a way to satisfy them? Ernest, I would die sooner than bring this disgrace upon you."

Yes, the Bishop of Oklaho saw it all now. That young face, so like his own, would tell the truth, and even more than the truth, to all the world if he were now to marry Helen. And yet his old love for her had returned as he sat there. No, not that. It was not a return of that careless, easy affection of his youth that he now felt, but a new emotion in which was a strange mingling of remorse and reverential love. Blended with it, too, was a yearning tenderness for his son. Why need a dread of the world's comments and misinterpretations hinder him from doing the right thing now? Surely he and Helen could be happy, and to the boy he would gladly supply the place of the father the lad had never known, if only—if only what? He rose and paced the floor, and Helen read his every thought and pitied him.

"You see, don't you?" she said, gently. "You must see all that your proposed settlement of the matter would bring with it. Scandal would be just as busy with your name as with mine. There would be endless discussions about you among your clergy in Oklaho. The other bishops would likewise talk you over, and perhaps it might happen that you would lose your office in the church."

"I could not be deposed from my position for a sin committed before my entrance into the ministry—a sin, too, which I had repented of and atoned for as far as possible," repeated the bishop, slowly, and as if the words hurt him in the saying.

"Of course you know best about all that," she responded; "but could you endure to have it said that the Bishop of Oklaho had married in order to legitimatize his son?"

At this sternly truthful putting of the matter the diocesan of Oklaho shuddered. How hard it all seemed!

"No, of course you could not," she went on, answering her own question. "Then, why place yourself in a position to have it said of you?"

"Better have this said of me than have it known that I had a son that I would not acknowledge," murmured the bishop, but she did not seem to heed, for she continued:

"My boy and I are happy here. We have enough to support us comfortably, and, now that you and I have met and understand each other, we can go our own ways as before. Had I not perceived that you recognized me this morning, I should never have sent for you nor let you know of my existence. But, since we have met once more, you will know that my feelings toward you are only the most friendly ones."

"But listen to me, Helen," exclaimed the other. "The matter must not end thus. I can resign my bishopric. Then we can marry and live where no one has ever heard of me. I can do this whenever you will consent to marry me. Ah, Helen! think what a happy future there may be for the three of us in some other country than this."

But he did not say "I will," only "I can," and this she noticed. Just then the lad returned to the house and entered the room where they were.

"Do you know, mother," he began, after the conversation had become general, "something so odd happened just now. Mason, the carpenter down the road, saw me with the bishop on the ferryboat, and, meeting me a few moments ago, asked me who he was, and said I looked enough like him to be his son. It was a queer thing to say, but I fancy it was all because my hair is like yours," he added, turning toward his mother's guest as he spoke.

"The man was not so far wrong," remarked the bishop, after a pause, "for I think you do look like me, my boy."

Mrs. Eccleston said nothing, but the boy blushed with pleasure again, not only by reason of what had been said, but because of the lingering tenderness he detected in the voice that had called him "my boy."

In a few moments the bishop arose to take leave, and asked the lad to accompany him to the ferry. While the boy was absent from the room in search of his hat, the bishop said in a low tone:

"Helen, I cannot consent to let you and the boy go out of my life.

"But you must, Ernest," she answered, sadly.

"No," he pleaded, "I must not. You will see me again before I leave Port Huron for Chicago on my way to Oklaho. And then you must tell me that you will consent."

"Do not come," she began, and then the boy joined them.

As the bishop and his companion went on to the ferry the former exerted himself to the utmost in talk to please the young fellow by his side, and when they parted the latter said, timidly, yet not without decision:

"I am sure that you are the best man I have ever known, and I am going to try to be like you in everything."

What reply could the right reverend shepherd make to this? And how could the lad know that his words pierced like a sword the heart of the man before him, the man whom he so adored? Involuntarily his memory recalled a passage read long ago and little heeded then; but now its full meaning was revealed as by a flash of lightning:

"There are natures in which, if they love us, we are conscious of having a sort of baptism and consecration. They bind us over to rectitude and purity by their pure belief about us, and our sins become the worst kind of sacrilege which tears down the invisible altar of trust."

As the boat moved away the bishop said to the boy, "We shall meet again," but he did not add, "to-morrow."

In the evening the diocesan of Oklaho preached again at Port Huron. From the pulpit he saw his son gazing at him from a far-off pew with adoring eyes, but Helen was not there. As usual the bishop spoke with but few notes, and on this occasion chose for his text the words, "Thou hast set our misdeeds before Thee, and our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance."

Upon this theme he delivered a sermon stronger even than that of the morning. Persuasion, entreaty, warning, command—all were blended in one masterful tide of eloquence. He besought his hearers to take home to themselves the thought that they could have no secrets from the Lord.

From the dark background of the pulpit the fair face of the bishop, with the gaslight falling full upon it, shone out like that of some pitying angel as he cried out, beseechingly:

"O, beloved, do not say to yourselves, 'The past is past, there is no use meddling with that. It is quite enough we henceforth live soberly and honestly and at peace with all men.' I beg of you not to drug your conscience with any such shameful nepenthe as that. While one sinful act of the past remains unatoned for by such admission of it on your part as will prevent in any degree its bitter fruitage, and right, as far as may be, what was done amiss—until all this is done by you, the act does not belong to your past. It remains your sin of the present moment."

Lower and lower sank the speaker's voice as he neared the close, but still each syllable might be heard distinctly throughout the church, till he ended with words that smote the ear like the awful utterances of remorseless fate:

"The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to scourge us."

The service over, the bishop and rector returned to the rectory, the former on the plea of fatigue going at once to his room, glad to be alone. From his window he could see the glitter of the lights on the Canadian shore, and the colored lamps of the ferry boat sliding back and forth across the river like some gigantic shuttle. But these were not needed to remind him of Helen and her boy over on the opposite shore where the lights glittered so bravely. His boy as well as hers! Why should he not claim this son of his before all the world, and act a father's part toward him henceforth? Had he not just been telling his hearers to face the consequences of their evil doing and to set the crooked straight?

"Lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway," he repeated to himself as he stood by the window.

In the room below the rector was remarking rather severely to his wife that for his part he felt that entirely too young men were now being raised to the episcopate, and that sound learning and gravity of deportment were made of very little account in the church nowadays, so far as his imperfect vision extended. To this his wife made no reply, being a woman of great discretion; but she knew very well what was the immediate cause of her husband's gloomy views.

The much-envied bishop above stairs was meanwhile longing for the night to be over, that he might return to Fort Edward and say to Helen that he was ready to give up everything for her sake and the boy's, and take them both to some distant place where no one could know anything of their past.

But was he ready? To go now to Helen with this proposal, and gain her acceptance of it, meant that he must sacrifice much that was very sweet to him. Name, as well as country, must be changed. Perhaps even in some remote place the story of his youth, distorted and exaggerated, might follow them and sully the fair name of his wife. It might some day come to the knowledge of his son, and cause him to turn from the man he now revered. Of what avail, then, the sacrifice of present honors and dignities? The setting right in the case would prove a mockery only, a miserable failure.

But, again, how could he remain longer in his office? He who had once brought shame upon a woman still living—he who was the father of an illegitimate son? What hypocrisy could equal this? And he thought with a great yearning of the beautiful woman who had forgiven him because she loved him, and of the boy who adored him—the boy who was his son.

The night passed and morning brought with it the necessity for prompt decision, for he knew that if he did not return to Helen this morning with the settled purpose of making her his wife at some definite period not far removed, it would be useless to look for her consent at a later time after weeks of indecision.

To take the morning train for Chicago meant for them both the maintenance of things as they were. To remain till afternoon meant the fulfillment of his promise made to Helen sixteen years before, the carrying out in the near future of yesterday's proposal.

Now had come the supreme moment of choice. Hesitation was no longer possible. Whatever course he adopted, there could be no looking back. Either way, the decision must be final.

The train which he had first planned to take was to leave at 10 o'clock in the morning. At twenty minutes before 10 the bishop was still weighing consequences, while the rector was inquiring if he should go with him to the station.

The train for Chicago left promptly on the stroke of 10, twenty minutes after the rector had asked his question.

Did it leave without the bishop?

Her Portrait

THIS night, and the restful silence
preens her wings
With notes of sweet content
and quiet thought
Across the firelight looking down,
and caught
Between the light's uncertain glimmerings—
A gaze intent of other worlds that
clings
To pictured eyes by cunning artist
wrought—
They follow me with tender pity
fraught,
As risen to height that scorneth earthly things.
The gentle head a little forward
thrown
Beneath its golden crown—no jewels
there;
In simple grace, a white, unfashioned gown
Enfolded loose, like Raphael's angels
wear;
Those quiet eyes across the mellow
glow,
Whose lashes fringe the dreams of
long ago.

—Bettie Garland.

The Fleet Returns.

THE fleet returns from the Shoals
to-night;
All the village folk are out;
Upon the beach is many a light,
And many a friend about,
And many a group of children bright
Make the wild echoes shout.

And on the beach are aged men,
And aged women, too,
And hand is clasped in withered hand,
While hearts beat warm and true,
And friends who have lost sight of
friends
Their ancient ties renew.

—Frank L. Sweet.